MERRIMACK MAGAZINE
AND
LADIES' LITERARY CABINET.

PUBLISHED BY *WHITTINGHAM & JOHN GILMAN*, NEWBURYPORT.

Vol. I.] SATURDAY, MARCH 1, 1806. [No. 29.

Communications.

'Hither the products of your closet-labors bring,
'Enrich our columns, and instruct mankind.'

FOR THE MERRIMACK MAGAZINE.

BIOGRAPHY OF MACKENZIE.

IN CONTINUATION.

THE ſucceſs with which the "Man of Feeling" had been publiſhed, encouraged its real author, to give within no long time after, to the world, a poem, under the title of "Purſuits of Happineſs," which the writer of this Memoir has not happened to read, but which though not often reprinted, has been much commended by perſons well able to judge of its merits.

In the "Man of the World," Mr. Mackenzie next produced a ſort of ſecond part to the "Man of Feeling." It breathes the ſame tone of exquiſite moral delicacy, and of refined ſenſibility. In his former fiction, the author had imagined a hero who found all the pleaſures and all the pains of his life, with all the amiable peculiarities of his character, in conſtant obedience to every emotion of his moral ſenſe.

In the "Man of the World," he exhibited on the contrary, a perſon ruſhing headlong to miſery and ruin, and ſpreading miſery all around him, by purſuing a happineſs which he expected to obtain, in defiance of the moral ſenſe. What other ſyſtem of moral philoſophy had ever the advantage of illuſtrations ſo elegant, as theſe volumes afford of that of Hutcheſon, and his pupil, Smith? It was not ungraciouſly received by the public, yet not altogether with that enthuſiaſm of delight and admiration which the Man of Feeling had commanded. The Man of the World was but the common character of a perſon ſacrificing all better conſiderations to the headlong purſuit of ſelfiſh and ſenſual pleaſure. This character had been often before drawn, and often with a bolder hand, with happier dexterity, with a deeper ſkill. The Man of Feeling, though ſomewhat, perhaps, akin to the family of St. Prieux and Yorick, was however, in many reſpects, a true original. This difference in nature between theſe two pieces, might even alone enable us to account for the inferiority of the ſucceſs of the Man of the World. Beſides this however, the manner of the author was no longer new to his readers; and that which wants the charm of abſolute novelty, wants what is by much the beſt of all recommendations to the favor of thoſe at leaſt who are deficient in judgment and taſte.

When the late Dr. Samuel Johnſon was at Edinburgh in the excurſion which he made to the iſles on the weſt coaſt of Scotland; the Man of the World was, at the houſe of his friend Mr. Boſwell, put in his hands. But Johnſon, though his own writings afford indubitable proofs, that he poſſeſſed the tendereſt of human hearts, was very far from being willing to acknowledge an unreaſoning moral ſenſe, as the true principle of diſcrimination between right and wrong, in the mind of man, and he deſpiſed or rather abhorred the faſhionable whine of ſenſibility as commonly affected, and very often dangerous. Perceiving, therefore, in the "Man of the World," few original obſervations on the practice of human life, and nothing in the incidents and paſſions, that was at once new and admirably faithful to the truth of nature; he ſoon threw down theſe volumes with diſguſt, and ſpoke with ſevere and ſlighting cenſure of their merits.

Mr. Mackenzie had the fortune to meet Dr. Johnſon, during his ſtay at Edinburgh, at breakfaſt, one morning in the houſe of the late amiable Dr. Blacklock. The gentle, modeſt, and unaffectedly elegant manners of Mr. Mackenzie, avoided all offence to the irritable Engliſh philoſopher. But unluckily, after Mr. Mackenzie had gone, Mrs. Blacklock ſpoke with a zeal in his praiſe, which excited a ſort of converſation quarrel between her and Johnſon. She juſtly commended Mr. Mackenzie, as joining to tenderneſs, and elegance of genius, the moſt amiable ſocial virtues; and mentioned, in proof of his filial piety, that his father and he lived ſtill together, in one houſe, in ſuch harmony, that it was difficult to ſay, whether the father ſhewed greater eſteem and kindneſs for his ſon, or the ſon more of reverence and affectionate attachment to his father. "They ought not to live, thus, together, Madam," anſwered Johnſon, roughly. Mrs. Blacklock, much aſtoniſhed, and even ſhocked, aſked how Dr. Johnſon could think ſo?——"The ſon, Madam, having attained the years of manhood and diſcretion, ought to become the maſter of a family for himſelf: the order of nature, and the uſes of ſociety, require that it ſhould be ſo. If it were the intention of Providence, that parents and their grown up children ſhould continue to make one family, it would be leſs rare than we now ſee that it is, for them to live in harmony together." Even this obſervation could not reconcile the lady to the idea of making that a ſubject of reprehenſion in Mr. Mackenzie, which appeared to her, to be the moſt amiable quality any young man could poſſeſs. In her polite attention to her gueſt, ſhe ſoon after aſked Dr. Johnſon to take another cup of tea; though he had before declined to have any more. "I tell thee no! woman!" replied Johnſon with fierce rudeneſs; they parted with mutual irritation. Johnſon afterwards remembered the Blacklocks with reſpect and kindneſs. But their gentieneſs and benevolence had been ſo much ſhocked by the roughneſs of his manners and the harſhneſs of his remarks that it was at leaſt with no common exerciſe of chriſtian forbearance and charity, if they were able afterward to think of him with the ſame benignity of judgment and of wiſhes which they were accuſtomed to exerciſe toward every perſon elſe.

Julia de Roubigné, a novel, in letters, is the laſt work larger in extent than a tale of a few pages, which Mr. Mackenzie has been known to attempt in this way. The fable is not unintereſting: the letters are written with great elegance and propriety of ſtyle. But, the ſentiments and characters are out of nature; and yet not among thoſe felicities of imagination, for which we are well content to ſee the limits of nature overleaped. The events are romantically tragic, and not of pleaſing example. This piece has been leſs frequently reprinted than either the "Man of Feeling," or the "Man of the World." Yet, there is in it, much to give delight to a tender and elegant mind, much that might even tranſport a youthful fancy to a delirium of wild melancholy and love.

He produced a tragedy, under the title of the "Prince of Tunis," which was acted at the Edinburgh Theatre. The repreſentation was repeated with applauſe for ſix nights. Mrs. Yates, then at Edinburgh, appeared in the principal female character. It has never been performed at any of the theatres in London.

In the year 1776, Mr. Mackenzie married Miſs Penuel Grant, ſiſter to Sir James Grant, of Grant.

Some years after, he and a few of his friends, who uſed to meet occaſionally, for convivial converſation, at a tavern kept by one Bayll, a Frenchman, projected the publication of a ſeries of papers ſimilar to the Spectator, on morals, manners, taſte, and literature. They were united in a club, which had the name of *Tabernacle*, and were all, or almoſt all, lawyers. Mr. Mackenzie was at the head of the project. Mr. Craig, Mr. Cullen, Mr. Bannatyne-Macleod, now judges in the ſupreme courts of Scotland, the late Mr. Abercrombie who died a Judge, Mr. Solicitor-general Blair, and Mr. George Home, clerk of ſeſſion, agreed to become his coadjutors. The papers were to be publiſhed in weekly numbers; and in alluſion to the repreſentations which they were to exhibit of human life, ſentiments, and manners, it was ſettled to give them the common title of *The Mirror*.

This ſcheme was carried into effect. The papers were publiſhed in weekly numbers, each filling a ſheet in folio. The ſucceſſion was continued for more than two years. The price of a ſingle copy of each number was three pence. About three or four hundred only were ſold, in ſingle papers; but this ſale, though inconſiderable, ſerved at leaſt to make the whole very advantageouſly known. The ſucceſſion of the numbers was no ſooner cloſed, than the whole were republiſhed in three duodecimo volumes. In England, eſpecially, they were now read with great applauſe. The approbation they received in London, which for ſuch a ſpecies of compoſitions in particular, is the very Athens of modern Europe, ſeemed to ſtamp an authority on the praiſes of thoſe by whom they were commended in Scotland, ſufficient to put all cenſure to ſilence. As the authors mingled in the higheſt circles of faſhionable and literary life, they wanted not opportunity, while their names remained unknown, to promote the reputation of their work, by many little artifices, which, tho' perfectly honourable and diſingenuous—for, of none elſe was any of them capable—could have been equally uſed, if they had, from the firſt, openly avowed it to be theirs. They had the diſcretion to hide their names from being at all mentioned in relation to it, till its ſucceſs was complete; and then, the appropriation of the different papers, in a new edition, to thoſe by whom they had been reſpectively written, ſerved but to renew and augment the public curioſity reſpecting the whole. They took money for the copy-right; out of which they, firſt, beſtowed an hundred pounds in charity to the Orphan Hoſpital; and with the reſt, purchaſed an hogſhead of claret for the uſe of the club.

Some years afterwards, conceiving that they had ſtill materials ſufficiently freſh and original among them, to furniſh out another ſeries of ſimilar papers, they produced, in the ſame manner, the numbers of the *Lounger*, which were equally received with favour at their firſt appearance; were collected in ſubſequent editions, in duodecimo and octavo; were at laſt publicly avowed by the authors; and continue ſtill to be read with pleaſure wherever the Engliſh language is known. Mr. Frazer-Tytler, now Lord Woodhouſlie of the court of ſeſſion, the late Dr. Henry, the hiſtorian, Dr. Currie of Liverpool, and ſome few other correſpondents, had furniſhed contributions, not in great quantity, which were inſerted, in the Mirror and Lounger, among the writings of the club.

In attempting to judge of the merits of theſe two publications, one muſt begin with owning, that they are but imitations. The imitation of the plan of the Tatlers, Spectators, & Guardians, is, indeed, common to the Mirrors and Loungers, with many other papers of a ſimilar nature. But, I doubt, whether there be any other ſimilar ſet of papers, that has leſs than theſe of originality to boaſt, in the two great provinces of ethical obſervations penetrating beyond the mere ſurface of life, to the general nature of man, and of light airy fictions, illuſtrative of the familiar manners of ſociety. Of ſerious morality, they have nothing of which the elements may not be found in the papers of Steele, Addiſon, Johnſon, and Hawkeſworth. Their dreams have been dreamed, told, and interpreted before: their viſions have been given by former ſeers: their letters from feigned characters, are merely echoes: their allegorical ironies ſcarce ever preſent Humour otherwiſe than in old clothes which ſhe had before worn threadbare.

It is remarkable, too, that though writing in Scotland, they have written rather of Engliſh than of Scottiſh manners. They probably feared, that if they ſhould boldly venture to mark the leading features of the manners peculiar to Scottiſh ſociety; they might by this both excite the offence of that narrow provincial circle in which they moved, and at the time produce a work that would have too much of Scottiſh in it, to find favour in England. Beſides, the ſpirit in which they wrote, ſeems to have been too much a merely imitative one, to take full advantage of thoſe circumſtances favourable to originality, in which their deſign was executed. *(Concl. in our next.)*

Miscellaneous Selections.

"*Various*, that the mind—ſtudious of change
"And pleas'd with novelty, may be indulg'd."

EXTRACT FROM SHERLOCK'S NEW LETTERS.

THE Count de Peltzer, an officer in the Pruſſian ſervice, was the only ſon of a widow. He was handſome, brave to an exceſs, and deeply in love with Mademoiſelle d' Benſkow. She was in her eighteenth year; gentle, pretty, and born with an extreme ſenſibility. Her lover, juſt turned of twenty, was loved with a paſſion equal to his own, and the day was fixed to make them happy, it was the 20th of June, 1778.

The Pruſſian troops are always ready to take the field; and the 17th of June, at ten o'clock at night, the Count's regiment received orders to march at midnight for Sileſia. He was at Berlin, and his miſtreſs at a country houſe four leagues from the town. He ſet out conſequently without ſeeing her; and he wrote to her from the firſt place where he ſtopped, that it was impoſſible for him to live without her; that it was eſſential to his happineſs that ſhe ſhould follow him immediately, and that they ſhould be married in Sileſia. He wrote at the ſame time to her brother, who was his moſt intimate friend, to plead his cauſe with her parents. She ſet out then accompanied by this brother, and her lover's mother. Never did the ſands of Brandenburgh appear ſo heavy to this charming girl; but at length the journey ended, and ſhe arrived at the town of Herſtadt, it was in the morning, and "Never" ſaid her brother to me, "did my eyes ſee a woman lovelier than my ſiſter. The exerciſe of the journey had added to her bloom, and her eyes painted what paſſed in her breaſt." But O human proſpects! how deceitful are you! how near often is the moment of wretchedneſs to the moment of felicity! The carriage is ſtopped to let paſs ſome ſoldiers who, advancing with ſlow ſteps, bore in their arms a wounded officer; the tender heart of the young lady was affected at the ſight: ſhe little ſuſpected that it was her lover.—Some Auſtrian foragers had approached the town, and the young Count went out to repulſe them. Burning to diſtinguiſh himſelf, he ruſhed with ardour before his troop, and fell the victim of his unhappy impetuoſity.—To deſcribe the ſituation of this unfortunate young woman would be to inſult at once your heart and your imagination, her lover is placed in his bed; his mother is at his feet, and his miſtreſs holds his hand. "O my Charlotte," cried he, opening a dying eye—he wanted to ſpeak; but his voice broke, and he melted into tears. His tears had pierced the ſoul of his miſtreſs; ſhe loſt her reaſon, and, 'No I will not ſurvive you,' cried ſhe, quite frantic, and ſeizing a ſword. They diſarmed her; and he made a ſign with his hand that they ſhould bring her to his bedſide. She came; he graſped her arm; and after two painful efforts to ſpeak, he ſaid, with a ſob, "Live, my Charlotte, to comfort my mother," and expired. When I paſſed thro' Berlin in '79, the unfortunate lady had not recovered her ſenſes.

ANECDOTE OF MONS. DE SARTINE.

AN Iriſh gentleman, who wiſhed to purchaſe an eſtate in France, lodged his money in the hands of a banker, who took it, as common on the continent, without giving the gentleman a voucher; but lodged it in an iron cheſt, and gave to the gentleman the key. When the contract for the purchaſe was made, he called on his banker to receive his caſh, when the latter per-